



## Westford Community Gardens Rules and Regulations

These Rules and Regulations have been developed to govern Westford's Community Gardens and to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for all. Towards this end, Garden Rules inform the Gardener of the expectations for participating in the Community Garden.

### Plot Assignment, Revenues & Agreements

Assignment of garden plots will be awarded by a first-come-first-serve system. Plot assignments are filled in the order the application is received. All applications should be received by **May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015**. A waiting list for plots will be created if needed, and donations returned if requested.

#### Waiting List and Multiple Plot Requests:

After May 15<sup>th</sup>, if there are empty/unclaimed plots, they will be offered to those Gardeners who have requested additional space on a first-come-first-serve basis. Second plots will be offered until all requests are filled, then third plots if any remain. In the event of unplanted or forfeited plots, they will be assigned on a first-come-first-serve basis to applicants on the waiting list and then to those wishing additional plots.

The sharing of plots is accepted only if the registering Gardener is a Westford resident (from now referred to as the "group leader"), and agrees to accept full responsibility for their co-gardeners actions at the site. If sharing a plot, please ensure that at least one of your group attends the mandatory Spring Meeting.

#### Non Westford Residents/Town employees:

Town employees and out-of-town applicants are invited to apply, and will be incorporated into the assignments plots of after May 15<sup>th</sup> and after all residents' requests have been filled (around May 22<sup>nd</sup>).

#### Plot Donations:

Annual plot donations will enable the Community Gardens to cover the costs of (but not limited to) water, compost, tilling, winter cover crops, and general maintenance, etc. Additional funds may also be raised by Gardeners, with amount and use agreed to by a majority of Gardeners. The suggested donations set forth below are based on estimates of what is needed to cover the costs of operating the Garden. If you wish to donate more, additional funds will be gratefully be accepted and put to work in the Gardens.

##### Suggested Plot Donation:

Full annual plot	(30' x 15')	\$40
Half annual plot	(15' x 15')	\$20
Financial hardship	(any size)	\$10

If you are donating, checks or money orders should accompany application forms. There is NO CASH policy. **No cash will be accepted in payment.**

**\*\* Please note: All checks returned for insufficient funds will be subject to a \$25 NSF fee (non-sufficient funds), payable to the "Town of Westford"\*\*.**

#### Plot Assignments:

Plots will be assigned and applicants notified on a rolling basis.

The assignment of a plot shall not be construed as creating or vesting in the Gardener any estate in the plot or any other portion of the Town's property.

The Gardener acknowledges and agrees to accept the plot in "as is" condition, and that the Town has made no representation or warranty regarding the fitness of the intended plot for its intended purpose.

Plots are not transferable.

## Start of the Season

Gardens must be planted by **June 1**. If plots are not planted by this date, they will be forfeited without return of donation. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The forfeited plots will then be used to fill requests on the waiting list or assigned as additional plots to those requesting them.

The planting of invasive species, perennials, trees and shrubs, and illegal plants is not allowed. Please contact the Garden Coordinator if unsure about any plants.

Please be considerate when planting tall crops (such as beans, corn and sunflowers), as to not shade neighboring garden plots or plantings. Planting of taller crops should follow a North-to-South positioning and should be done towards the center of your own plot, so as to limit shading of your neighbor's plants. Please see the Garden Coordinator or garden handouts for more details.

If you are considering growing plants that spread (such as pumpkins and other squash), please ensure the fruit and foliage are contained within your plot space. Plants that vine onto the paths or other plots will be trimmed back or removed.

## During The Growing Season

This Community Garden will use organic growing practices imposed by the land-owner - the Westford Conservation Commission. For permissible soil amendments, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and pesticides, please consult the Garden Coordinator, the Division of Natural Resources, or The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) at <http://www.omri.org/omri-lists>

No permanent structures are permitted in the garden or within a plot. Any personal property remaining on the plot upon termination of the gardener's rights or at the end of the season will become the property of the Town and may be disposed of or used at the Town's discretion.

The Town reserves the right to enter upon the plot at any time for all lawful purposes, and remove any improvements, structures or plantings in violation of these rules at the gardener's expense.

Gardens are intended for personal use, and commercial sale from plots is **prohibited**. However, donation of produce and flowers to local food pantries is encouraged.

### Plot Maintenance:

Each Gardener (or group leader) is responsible for the weekly upkeep of their own Garden plot. Watering, weeding, harvesting and any other garden related maintenance are all the responsibility of the Gardener.

It is each Gardener's responsibility to notify the Garden Coordinator if for any reason (health, vacation, emergencies), you are temporarily unable to maintain your plot. If any plot remains unattended for more than two weeks, that plot is subject to forfeiture and reassignment. Please contact the Garden Coordinator as soon as possible to let them know who will be tending your plot in your absence.

Gardeners are responsible for the weeding and maintenance of their surrounding pathways and communal areas. Gardeners are also asked to help out with keeping the communal spaces tidy and will be asked to participate in Community Garden work days.

When you find rocks in your plot, please remove them from the garden area and pile them in labeled areas (not in common paths).

Borders and edgings are not allowed around plots. Plot markers are the only exception to this and will be placed there by the Agricultural Commission.

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Pieces of wood (or other suitable material) may be laid down along the INTERIOR of your plot to facilitate walking within your plot (to avoid root compression) but must be removed by the end of the season.

No sand or gravel is allowed to be added to plots.

### **Composting plant material:**

The compost bins are only to be used by the Community Garden for weeds, trimmings, and plant material pulled up during the growing season. Please ensure that plant material is cut into less than 6 inch pieces before depositing into the compost, as this speeds the compost process.

Do not place diseased plants into the compost, or any other plant, food, or substance from outside of the garden.

Compost is managed and maintained by the Gardeners and volunteers. Any questions about it or the process should be emailed to Master Composter Sharon Chew: [schew@westfordma.gov](mailto:schew@westfordma.gov)

### **Watering:**

Water will be provided via a tank that will be filled with Town Water (for the 2015 growing season). Water must then be carried via bucket or watering can to your garden plot. The Community Garden must pay for this water out of the plot donations collected at the beginning of the season, so please conserve this expensive and precious resource.

You will be provided with information on recommended watering practices and water conservation for your garden plots. Gardeners are asked to follow these practices (and your plants will be happy too!)

### **Equipment/tools:**

Gardeners will have use of the communal wheel barrows on a first-come-first-serve basis. Wheel barrows must remain on premises and must be returned to the shed when not in use. **Wheel barrows are for transporting garden supplies and plants only.** Gardeners are asked to share during times of high demand.

## **Access/Conduct/Gardeners and Their Guests**

Gardens are open dawn until dusk, seven days a week.

As per the Westford Town Code, Article IV, §199-12, parking along the roadside in this area is **prohibited**.

Drive and park in designated areas only. Please respect our neighbor, the tenant leasing the hayfield, and do not drive on, or walk through, the hayfield.

All paths must be kept clear for access and safety reasons.

Gardeners and their guests shall observe and obey all applicable federal, state and local laws, and abide by these rules at all times.

Children and other guests are welcome in the Garden but must be accompanied by an adult Gardener and must be supervised at all times.

The Gardener listed on the application on file with the Town shall be solely responsible for the conduct of all family members, guests, or any other person, including minor children, that they invite to participate in the Program or who enter upon the Community Gardens property with their consent, and the Gardener agrees that they are responsible for any accident, injury, death or property damage that may be caused by those who they invite to enter the Community Gardens property and/or participate in the Program.

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Gardeners may harvest vegetables and flowers from their garden only, unless acting as a temporary substitute for another Gardener.

Dogs are not allowed in the Community Gardens for health and safety reasons. Service dogs are exempt from this regulation.

No smoking or tobacco products are allowed in the Garden. Tobacco can transmit a lethal virus to tomatoes, and cigarettes contain lethal toxins that can contaminate soil and plants. Smoking is a fire hazard.

Drugs, alcohol, radios, fire and weapons of any kind are not allowed in this Garden.

No glass allowed in the Community Gardens at any time. Plastic bags should be secured while you are working on your plot so they do not blow around, and should be removed when you leave.

This is a carry-in/carry-out facility. There will be no trash cans provided, and you are responsible for your own trash removal at all times.

### End of Season

All plots must be completely cleared by **October 1st**, after which the soil will be tilled under and planted with a winter cover crop. This includes the removal of weeds, personal items, stakes and posts, and plants. Gardeners who have not cleaned up their plot(s) by this date may not be invited back in the future.

### Governance & Community Service

Gardeners understand and agree that all services performed will be performed on a strictly voluntary basis, and that they will receive no remuneration, pay or compensation of any kind and will not be employees of the Town.

Gardeners **must** attend the Annual Spring Meeting and participate in end of season cleanup. Those unable to attend these events must communicate with the Garden Coordinator.

Gardeners must attend at least one additional meeting during the season.

Gardeners are also expected to volunteer for shared tasks, scheduled cleanup dates, and get to know fellow Gardeners.

Gardeners are asked to volunteer for a minimum of 4 hours a month towards the care and upkeep of the Gardens. This is in addition to the work you do within your own plot. This can include, but is not limited to, participation in shared tasks, work during scheduled cleanup days, and other maintenance. It is also a nice way to get to know your Community Garden neighbors.

The Garden Coordinator is the communication point person for arranging volunteer work.

The Westford Community Gardens Working Group (WCGWG) and the Westford Agricultural Commission are responsible for ensuring the rules are followed at all times.

Should conflicts or issues arise, please contact the Garden Coordinator by email at: [westford.community.gardens@gmail.com](mailto:westford.community.gardens@gmail.com) or by telephone at (978) 237-GROW. The Garden Coordinator is your first line of communication in these matters.

The following page should be printed, signed, and returned with your completed application form.

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**Please print and sign this page and return it by mail together with your completed APPLICATION FORM and signed RELEASE OF CLAIMS, INDEMNITY AND HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT**

**Thank you!**

**The Town may revoke the right to use the plot at any time if it determines that the Gardener's use is inconsistent with these rules. Failure to comply with any of the rules may result in loss of gardening privileges, including the loss of the assigned plot with no return of donation.**

I agree to be civil, honest and cooperative when interacting with other Gardeners. I understand our common bond is growing local food in our very own town.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign your name: \_\_\_\_\_